

Author	Rosario, Lalaine Roy
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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to understand and describe how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives addressing youth employability in the country are communicated by Philippine-based companies with the aim of ensuring beneficiary mobilization. This specifically (1) described the CSR initiatives' communication strategies addressing youth employability by three Philippine-based companies, (2) drew insights on the three cases based on beneficiary mobilization resulting from the communication process implemented, (3) identified the best communication strategies for CSR initiatives based on the three case studies of the Philippine-based companies, and (4) recommended a communication model for implementing CSR initiatives for the purpose of beneficiary mobilization.

This study addresses the lack of researches in the field of CSR initiatives implementation by Philippine-based companies, that targets youth employability in the country.

Three Philippine-based companies conducting CSR initiatives addressing youth employability were the participants of the study. Key Informant interviews and Document Analysis were the data gathering tools used.

Participants of the Key informant interviews were Corporate Affairs/Corporate Communication Managers/Officers Human Resources Managers, and Program Officers in their respective companies, who are directly involved in the implementation of their respective CSR initiatives. They conduct programs as part of their CSR initiatives, that include (1) college scholarship grants and (2) training to employment programs. One to two participants per company were interviewed.

Document analysis was also implemented to support the insights gathered from the Key Informant Interviews. Public documents such as press releases, company websites, social media data (photos, texts, and videos), and blog entries were analyzed.

Comparative Case Analysis is used as the research methodology. The unit of analysis include the three Philippine-based companies and their communication strategies implemented in conducting their CSR initiatives to achieve beneficiary mobilization. The study revealed the various internal and external communication strategies of the three Philippine-based companies and the communication model that worked for them, resulting in beneficiary mobilization. Key Analytical themes surfaced from the three cases and were identified as the following:

Theme 1: The CSR Initiatives of the three-Philippine based companies are embedded in their DNA, as implied in their vision and mission statements, as well as their core values.

Theme 2: The implementors of the CSR initiatives are internal and are direct employees of the three-Philippine based companies.

Theme 3: Companies conduct both internal and external communication strategies in the implementation of their CSR initiatives, however external Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility In communication strategies allow beneficiary mobilization compared to internal communication strategies. The external communication strategies conducted by the three Philippine-based companies are combinations of Personal, Print, and Digital Communication. However, the recommended communication strategies that allow beneficiary mobilization apply for Personal and Digital Communication strategies.

Theme 4: The external communication strategies implemented by the three Philippine-based companies in conducting their CSR initiatives with the intention of beneficiary mobilization are communicated through the partner organizations in the form of foundations or schools. Thus, it can be implied that a mediated communication model is being implemented by these corporations to achieve not just beneficiary mobilization but partner mobilization as well.

Theme 5: The three Philippine-based companies' provision for the number of slots available for its beneficiaries per year for the internship and scholarship programs may be proportional to the net income of the implementing company.

Theme 6: The three Philippine-based companies conduct their respective CSR initiatives addressing youth employability with the objective of providing sustainability to the company and at the same time adhering to philanthropical objectives of the society.

Theme 7: The external communication strategies implemented by the three Philippine-based companies in conducting their CSR initiatives, as contextualized in the Uses and Gratifications theory, imply that what induces beneficiary mobilization is highly influenced by the gratification of the needs and motives of the target audiences and the implementors.

The analysis concluded that the three Philippine-based companies utilized targeted external communication strategies that allow them to recruit participants for their respective CSR initiatives advocating youth employability.

This study was guided by the Mersham and Skinner's Theory of Communication, as well as the Uses and Gratifications Theory of Katz, Blumler and Gurentich.

According to Mersham and Skinner, the communication process is two-way and interactive. Both ends of the communication model can be a communicator and a recipient and participate equally in the exchange of the message. The original source of the message which are the implementors of the CSR initiatives, conduct communication strategies to achieve beneficiary mobilization. Once the original source of the message receives positive feedback or in the case of this study, beneficiary mobilization, it means that the communication process was successful and can be recommended to other companies implementing the same CSR initiatives.

In the context of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, the study realized that the three Philippine-based companies implement targeted external communication strategies that gratify their (1) corporate image, and (2) social integrative needs (acceptance of the society through their respective corporate social investment and philanthropic initiatives).

The recommended external communication strategies for beneficiary mobilization were categorized in two: (1) personal communication (face-to-face meetings) and (2) digital communication (e-mails, texts, mobile, social media chats, groups) that were mostly communicated by the implementing companies through their Corporate Communications and Human Resources Department or their Corporate foundations. The framework of the CSR initiative and the call for applications are the communicating Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives core messages crafted and are sent to partner foundations or schools which will then be communicated to the target participants (the incoming students of the partner schools or the youth under the foster care of the partner foundations).

As a synthesis of the three communication models of the three Philippine-based companies, an external communication model with program implementer both acting as the sender and receiver of the encoded and decoded message (call for applications) coming from the target partners (schools and foundations) and participants (unemployed youth and college students) is recommended. With this model, the partner organizations filter the candidates before they get endorsed to the companies implementing the CSR initiatives. Thus, it can be implied that a mediated communication model that allows partner and beneficiary mobilization works for the three Philippine-based companies.

The targeted communication strategy and model (a) allows sending of the recruitment information to the right candidates, (b) lessens rework by limiting the information to candidates that do not fit the program requirements, (c) saves the implementers' time and energy. The more time, energy, and resources are conserved in implementing the communication strategies, the more operational expenses of the companies are saved and will be used to continuously support their programs that will help more unemployed Filipino youth in equipping themselves and their families to have better lives.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Beneficiary Mobilization, Mersham and Skinner's Theory of Communication, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Key Informant Interviews, Internal and External Communication, Personal Communication, Digital Communication